

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 JEC PA 33051 281839Z

43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 NEA-10 EUR-25 DRC-01 DPW-01 /163 W

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P R 281749Z DEC 73

FM USDEL JEC PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 169

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L JEC PARIS 33051

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: GVN-PRG BILATERALS: 34TH PLENARY SESSION, DECEMBER
28, 1973

1. SUMMARY: GVN/PRG TALKS WERE MORE MODERATE IN TONE THAN
LAST WEEK, AT LEAST ON THE GVN SIDE, BUT REFLECTED CONTINUING
STALEMATE. THI FOR PRG CLAIMED GVNDL'S STRONG LANGUAGE AT
PREVIOUS SESSION EFLECTED GVN SABOTAGE OF TALKS IN PARIS AND
MILITARY ESCALATION ON THE GROUND IN SVN. HE CALLED FOR AN END
TO US INTERVENTION IN VN AND GVN/PRG NEGOTIATIONS ON A REAL
CEASEFIRE, PRISONER RELEASE, AND APPLICATION OF DEOMCRATIC
LIERTIES. GVN REP PHONG DEFENDED RIGHT OF GVNDL TO
PROTEST PRG MISDEEDS, AND URGED PRG TO ACCEPT GVNDL PROCEDURAL
PROPOSALS DESIGNED TO ADVANCE NEGOTIATIONS. PRG PRESS SPOKESMAN
SAID HE HAD NO OFFICIAL INFORMATION ON PRESS REPOTS FROM
SAIGON INDICATING AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON FURTHER
CIVILIAN PRISONER RELEASES, BUT INDICATED PRG WAS PREPARED TO
RESUME RELEASES AS AGREED LAST JULY. NEXT MEETING JANUARY 4.
END SUMMARY

2. ACTING CHIEF PRGDELDINH BA THI OPENED WITH A PROTEST
AT STRONG LANGUAGE USED BY GVNDL AT PREVIOUS MEETING (TO
PROTEST HELICOPTER INCIDENT) AND ALLEGED GVN REPRESENTATIVE IN
TPJMC HAD RECENTLY USED EVEN WORSE LANGUAGE, GOING SO FAR AS TO
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PAGE 02 JEC PA 33051 281839Z

ISSUE TREATS AGAINST SECURITY OF MEMBERS OF PRG DELEGATION TO

THAT BODY. THI DECLARED THAT "INSOLENT AND PROVOCATIVE" LANGUAGE OF GVN WAS A NEW STEP IN GVN SCHEME TO SABOTAGE ANY SETTLEMENT OF INTERNAL QUESTIONS OF SVN. HE ALLEGED SURTHUR THAT, ON ORDERS FROM US, GVN WAS MATCHING VERBAL ESCALATION WITH MILITARY ESCALATION INCLUDING BOMBING AND SHELLING OF AREAS DEEP IN PRG ZONE OF CONTROL. THI DENOUNCED AN ALLEGED MASSACRE NOVEMBER 21 IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE. HE CONCLUDED FOREGOING ACTS INDICATED CLEARLY GVN DESIRED TO SABOTAGE PARIS AGREEMENT AND CONQUER ALL SVN BY FORCE IN SERVICE OF U.S. NEO-COLONIALISM. THI WARNED PEOPLE AND PRG WOULD FIGHT TO DEFEND PARIS AGREEMENT. HE THEN LAUNCHED ATTACK ON US FOR ALLEGEDLY INCREASING MILITARY AID TO GVN, MAINTAINING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF MILITARY ADVISORS IN SVN, AND CARRYING OUT RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER PRG ZONE OF CONTROL. I CLOSING THI CALLED ON US TO HALT ABOVE-MENTIONED ACTIVITIES AND DEMANDED THAT GVN BEGIN TO NEGOTIATE QUESTIONS OF AN EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE, THE RELEASE OF CIVILIAN PRISONERS, AND THE APPLICATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES.

3. IN A BRIEF AND MODERATELY-WORDED STATEMENT ACTING CHIEF GVNDDEL NGUYEN ZUAN PHONG DEFENDED HIS DELEGATION'S RIGHT TO PROTEST ENERGETICALLY THE OTHER SIDE'S ATTACK ON FPJMT HELICOPTERS, JUST AS PREVIOUSLY GVNDDEL HAD BEEN FORCED TO DENOUNCE OTHER CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS AND ACTIONS DIRECTED AGAINST THE ICCS. PHONG THEN RECALLED THE VARIOUS PROCEDURAL PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD IN RECENT MEETINGS BY GVNDDEL: AVOIDANCE OF STERILE POLEMICS, ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUPS TO DEAL WITH THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS FACED IN THE TALKS (DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES, ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD, ORGANIZATION OF GENERAL ELECTIONS, VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES IN SVN), AND AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TIME LIMIT BY WHICH TO REACH AN OVERALL AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE A DATE FOR ELECTIONS. PHONG CONCLUDED THAT REJECTION OF THESE PROPOSALS COULD ONLY MEAN THE OTHER SIDE INTENDED TO CONTINUE ITS ATTEMPTS TO ANNEX SVN BY FORCE.

4. ACCORDING TO GVNDDEL SOURCE, ENSUING DISCUSSION WAS ALONG SAME LINES AS PREPARED STATEMENTS. TWO SIDES AGREED TO MEET AGAIN JANUARY 4.

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PAGE 03 JEC PA 33051 281839Z

5. AT AFTERNOON PRESS CONFERENCE PRG SPOKESMAN DUONG DINH THAO IN PREPARED REMARKS SAID A) GVNDDEL'S PROCEDURAL PROPOSALS WERE ONLY A COVER-UP FOR GVN SABOTAGE OF PARIS AGREEMENT; B) SAIGON TROOPS WERE STEALING THE PEOPLE'S RICE FURING HARVEST TIME IN THE DELTA, FORCING PRG TO TAKE ENERGETIC MEASURES TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE; C) PEOPLE OF SVN AND PRG WANT PEACE BUT ARE DETERMINED TO EFEND PARIS AGREEMENT. IN Q AND A PERIOD REPORTERS WERE CONCERNED MAINLY WITH VERIFYING NEWS REPORTS FROM SAIGON

INDICATING TWO SIDES HAD REACHED AGREEMENT ON RESUMPTION OF RETURN OF 5,081 CIVILIAN DETAINEES. THAO REPLIED HE HAD NO OFFICIAL INFORMATION BUT THAT PRG WAS READY AT ANY TIME TO RESUME RELEASES IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREEMENT OF LAST JULY IF GVN WOULD DROP ITS "UNREASONABLE CONDITIONS". ASKED IF PRISONER RELEASE WOULD IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR GVN/PRG TALKS, THAO EMPHASIZED IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF PARIS AGREEMENT WOULD BE DIFFICULT AS LONG AS U.S. CONTINUED ITS INTERFERENCE IN SVN AND GVN CONTINUED ITS CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS. THAO STATED FURTHER THAT RELEASE OF "A SMALL NUMBER OF CIVILIANS" WOULD NOT DEMONSTRATE GOOD WILL IF ACCOMPANIED BY FURTHER POLICE OPERATIONS AND MORE ARRESTS.
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